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Search History

DATE: Sunday, April 17, 2005 Printable Copy Create Case

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L10: Entry 5 of 5 File: USPT Oct 8, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6463372 B1
TITLE: Vehicle collision damage reduction system

Detailed Description Text (19):
On the other hand, FIG. 3 is a block diagram showing the structures of side body airbags 20R and 20L independently assembled into side members 6R and 6L on the right and left (FIG. 6a), respectively. FIGS. 7a to 7c are schematic representations illustrating how the safety vehicle structure with the above elements works from the collision predicting until operation of the airbag and finally the collision. As is shown in FIG. 3 and FIGS. 7a to 7c, these side body airbags 20R and 20L can be independently operated in response to collision predicting sensors 10R and 10L arranged to the right and left of the vehicle 1 as the object detecting means 10. That is, as shown in FIG. 7b, upon an off-set collision, in which only the collision predicting sensor 10R, one of the collision predicting sensors, predicts the "emergency level", the side member 6R, which is the side to be impacted, will be greatly crushed so that the engine 2A and other equipped parts in the engine room 2 disposed to the right of the vehicle 1 are substantially deformed, whereas a bag 22 arranged in a case 21R of the body airbag 20R in the side member 6R side is inflated before the collision, as shown in FIGS. 7b and 7c. Thereby, the collision energy can be efficiently absorbed in the collision side. Also, the body airbag 20 shown in FIG. 6a is used together to thereby prevent the deformation from affecting on the cabin 3 side while energy absorbing capacity of the front of the vehicle 1 in a collision is increased to thereby reduce damage to a pedestrian in case of a collision to the pedestrian.

Detailed Description Text (22):
A damage reduction technology has been conventionally known in that energy absorbing means is provided in the steering column 31 in case of an occupant "P" falling over the steering wheel 33 via the airbag in a collision (see FIG. 1). For example, the column is shortened in the axial direction by deforming a bellows, a steel mesh, or the like in the axial direction while maintaining the steering functions. In this embodiment, the EA load characteristics are changed on the basis of the collision scale and the danger level detected by the object detecting means 10 or the collision danger level determining means 12 and also on the basis of the occupant physique obtained from the occupant seating information detecting means 80. FIG. 8a shows an example of settings of characteristics in the column EA load characteristics means (not shown) corresponding to the collision scale (intensity of the collision) detected by an impact sensor such as an acceleration sensor. The load characteristics may be changed according to one or plural quantitative threshold values established, and the EA load characteristics may also be established in response to changes obtained by multiple times of detection.